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A.S.A.P. of Catawba County

A local coalition has changed its name but its powerful mission remains the same. Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention (A.S.A.P.), formerly known as the Catawba County Substance Abuse Collation, continues its work to prevent and reduce underage drinking through community involvement.

In a 2008 student survey, 43.5% of Catawba County middle and high schools students reported using alcohol in the past year. Another statistic showed that 23% of that same group said that they got drunk at least once in the past two weeks at the time of the survey.

A.S.A.P. is working to change the conditions that contribute to the widespread use of alcohol among teens. “Underage drinking is a community problem,” said Louise Ackerman, A.S.A.P. Chairwoman. “It’s associated with risky sexual behaviors, motor vehicle accidents, illicit drug use and other actions that have a negative impact on Catawba County as a whole.”

To address the problem A.S.A.P. is introducing the “Not Here” Initiative, a countywide effort to partner with law enforcement, schools, neighborhoods, parents, and merchants to reduce the availability of alcohol to minors and change attitudes that enable youth drinking.

Departments around the state have already taken notice of A.S.A.P. The North Carolina Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services (DMHDDSAS) has selected A.S.A.P. as an award recipient under the 2009-2010 NC-Preventing Underage Drinking Initiative. The \$10,000 award will help A.S.A.P. implement the “Not Here” Initiative.

A.S.A.P. is a coalition of Catawba County residents with members from all sectors of the community, including education, law enforcement, the criminal justice system, the faith community, mental health, social services, public health, local business, parents and youth.

The coalition is part of Catawba County Health Partners, a local Healthy Carolinians partnership organized to enhance the quality of life for all people in Catawba County. Health Partners currently focuses on four health priorities: Access to Healthcare, Childhood Obesity, Substance Abuse, and Cancer.

To learn more about A.S.A.P. or Catawba County Health Partners, please contact Christina McNally at 828-695-5818 or visit www.catawbacountyhealthpartners.org.

Partnering together to enhance the quality of life for all people in Catawba County